

APPROVED BY BOARD OF SELECTMEN

**TOWN OF DARIEN
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, MAY 2, 2005**

ATTENDANCE: First Selectwoman Evonne Klein; Linda Santarella; Barbara Thorne; Joseph Miceli; Robert Harrel.

STAFF: John Crary, Administrative Officer

OTHER: Peter Hovell, Craig Curtis,

CALL TO ORDER

First Selectwoman Klein called the meeting to order at 6:25 p.m.

1ST SELECTWOMAN'S REPORT

First Selectwoman Klein stated that she will be testifying tomorrow and Thursday at the Citing Council Evidenciary Hearings in New Britain. The board members have received a copy of her testimony in their packets, which is public information that has been filed appropriately. All towns except for Stamford have filed testimonies. Norwalk has proposed an alternate route, which takes the project out of Darien. There is plenty of information available to read on the project. Darien is not contesting the need for electricity to the Stamford substation, it's just that Darien's roadways are not appropriate for this project. John Crary, Captain Lovello, Bob Steeger, Jeremy Ginsburg, and Mark McEwen will be going. There will be a meeting with the attorney tomorrow morning at 9:30 a.m.

The Memorial Day parade information will be sent home in this Friday's packet.

First Selectwoman Klein said that the future board meetings are as follows:

Special Meeting Wednesday, May 4, 2005 from 5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. to conduct Charter Revision interviews. Ms. Hanafée will then file the appropriate notices.

Monday, May 9, 2005 from 5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. Charter Revision interviews

Sometime before or on Wednesday, May 11, 2005, they will be voting on the Charter Revision Commission.

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

Mr. Crary reported that there is a website meeting on Wednesday, May 4, 2005 at 3:30 p.m. with all the department heads. The purpose is to talk about the work of the committee, the effect it has on the town, and to get any comments or recommendations from the department heads before

the committee comes before the Board of Selectmen at the end of May or in early June. Mr. Crary said if anyone wanted to join them, they were welcome to.

NEW BUSINESS

a) Meet with the members of the Board of Finance regarding 2006-07 budget

Peter Hovell, Board of Finance, said that three people from the Board of Finance were here tonight, and he thanked the Board of Selectmen for inviting the Board of Finance to discuss future town finances. The past budget session was painful, arduous and difficult. The Board of Finance would like to work with the Board of Selectmen to ensure a smoother and more fiscally prudent budget session next year. He felt that the magic of Darien was comprised of fiscally prudent residents, tremendous volunteer efforts, and sports minded people. He feels that the majority of the townspeople want their taxes held to a minimum. The increase of 8.95% is not acceptable for future budgets. One year ago, the Board of Finance had asked the Board of Selectmen to reduce their headcount by 1.5 people, which the Board of Selectmen wasn't ready to act on. The reduction was hid in the contingency fund. The reduction cannot be hid again this year, and now the headcount has to be reduced by 2.5 people. The Board of Finance is not saying the Board of Selectmen is overstaffed. They are saying that things can be done more efficiently, and Darien can be managed more effectively. He proposed that everyone look carefully at all services to see if the same services can be delivered for a better price. He commended the on-line system for registrations, and he hoped that other areas will follow suit. He also commended the increase on fees and charges. The effort of cost reduction and service enhancement applies equally to the Board of Education.

In closing, Mr. Hovell said that in looking at the 5 year financial forecast, which was constructed primarily with the Board of Selectmen's numbers, next year's budget won't be any easier than this year's unless steps are taken now.

Comments from the Board of Selectmen:

Mr. Harrel asked what the expected increase in debt service will be. Mr. Hovell replied that it's \$7-9M this year; \$10M next year; \$10.5M the following year; \$11.3M the year after that, and then \$11.5M the year after that.

First Selectwoman Klein reported that she, Mr. Crary, and Ms. Clarke have already made some appointments, and they have plans to review some budget options and the organizational structure of Town Hall. An analysis will be made of the changes in service that have taken place without adding staff, and she thinks the financial planning task force should be involved.

Ms. Thorne reported that the taxes pay for what we need as well as what is wished for. The Board of Finance, at the beginning of the budget season, gave the Board of Selectmen guidance in the following three areas: Capital, funding for capital budget, and personnel. She thanked the Board of Finance for their observations.

First Selectwoman Klein said she wondered if the community really thinks the taxes are too high. There is a demand for service. If there is a segment of the population that has an issue with what they can afford, they will look at it and possibly increase the tax relief numbers. Perhaps a survey should be done again. Mr. Hovell said he had suggested to the Planning & Zoning Department to develop an elderly housing building. First Selectwoman Klein said that the Housing Authority met recently to push for more affordable housing. Mr. Harrel asked about the conveyance tax. Mr. Hovell replied that it's permanent this year at 3%. Some discussion followed regarding the possibility of getting bonds for larger ticket items during the next 5 or 6 years. First Selectwoman Klein thanked the Board of Finance for their time.

b) Third Turf Field – Gary McCarthy

Mr. McCarthy was not present. First Selectwoman Klein said that the Board of Education said no to the project.

c) Transfer

Police Department

Overtime expenditures in the patrol division are running at above average levels due to vacancies or injury. Staffing levels in the patrol division are maintained at contractually established minimums.

Currently, we have two officers in training at the Police Academy and two recent Academy graduates in field training; the two officers in field training will not be ready for assignment into patrol squads until late June. One officer remains injured and is not due to return until early June. One sergeant remains on military leave in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Finally, we are in the process of accepting application for a patrol officer vacancy with one additional vacancy to occur in mid-May due to a retirement.

These staffing shortages are contributing to an anticipated shortfall in the Patrol Wages-Overtime account. There are four pay periods remaining and the overtime account presently has a balance of approximately \$13,700 – an amount that will be insufficient to meet anticipated expenditures through the balance of the fiscal year. These vacancies, however, leave a favorable balance in the Patrol Wages – Full Time account.

I am therefore requesting a transfer of \$30,000 from Patrol Wages – Full Time into Patrol Wages – Overtime.

RESOLVED:

That the following transfer of appropriations is approved for referral to the Board of Finance:

FROM:			TO:		
Acct No	Account	Amount	Acct No	Account	Amount
10302233 81001	Patrol Wages-FT	30,000	10302233 81004	Patrol Wages-Overtime	30,000

- ** MR. HARREL MOVED TO APPROVE THE TRANSFER OF \$30,000 FROM THE PATROL WAGES – FT ACCOUNT (#10302233 81001) TO THE PATROL WAGES – OVERTIME ACCOUNT (#10302233 81004).**
- ** MS. THORNE SECONDED.**
- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Crary reported that there will be a swearing in ceremony for three police promotions this Thursday, May 5, 2005 at 6:00 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

- a) May 9, 2005 – RTM to Adopt the Town Budget at 8:15 p.m.
- b) May 10, 2005 – Board of Education meeting at 7:30 p.m.
- c) May 10, 2005 – Planning & Zoning General Meeting at 8:00 p.m.
- d) May 11, 2005 – Board of Selectmen Executive Session Meeting at 5:30 p.m.
- e) May 17, 2005 – Board of Finance Meeting at 7:45 p.m.
- f) May 18, 2005 – Parks and Recreation meeting at 7:30 p.m.

OTHER BUSINESS

(A two-thirds majority vote is required to add an item to the agenda)

- ** DR. MICELI NOMINATED MS. SANTARELLA AS ACTING FIRST SELECTWOMAN.**
- ** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

There was some discussion anticipating an executive session to discuss a personnel issue. It was decided that the meeting would be held on Friday at 4:00 p.m. It was suggested that Ms. Graham let any of the people involved know so they could be aware.

**** MS. SANTARELLA MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Marr
Telesco Secretarial Services